848 soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice
684 is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsible and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge like all pledges is called ndanga. It consists of a knife, a ring of copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

833 Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

[77] The Nkundó have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays, natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

833 The Nkundó have sexual relations only during the night. To
●753 do so in the daytime would be to risk being striken by a mortal illness
684 called bombilé (derived from mbilé "noon," by extension, "day"),

833 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its
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1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (nsengó), and it is water (bàsi bale nsengó éâ bombilé). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilé has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [515] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Botswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of
845 "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused
843 by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since
937 he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to
[472] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of
853 the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing.
837 As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- isɛ́ aɓoma bɔ̀na la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no

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1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

843 3) They must not climb up on the roof (they are not forbidden to climb a palm tree in order to cut off nuts)

4) They must not eat animals killed by a carnivore (leopard, 843 crocodile, etc.), or the child would die a sudden and unnatural 262 death like the victims of such wild beasts. [480]

825 5) They must abstain from animals such as porcupines, anteaters, certain birds, crocodiles, and gavials, (1) who are in

1. In this region women never eat snakes or bats (loléma, bonkǫ́ḿ, ífukyá).

the habit of living in the hollows of trees or in dens. The delivery would be very painful if they ate them, for the child would roll up and crouch in the mother's womb. Fish that find shelter in passageways do not produce such consequences and are therefore eaten.

6) They must not eat turtles (2). A very difficult birth

2. In some tribes (Bongili, Bonkoso) women always abstain from eating such reptiles.

is feared, for the turtle withdraws into its shell and encloses its anal extremities as in a vise, and the child would do the same.

7) They must not eat the head of a monkey. The child would be born with deep-set eyes resembling the monkey's.

8) They must not eat the large antelope known as mbuli, because it has a long neck and flabby flesh, and the child would acquire the same defects.

[753] 9) They must not eat the lioólǫ́ fish, which would cause migraines, since it swims fiercely without direction.

The results of bokeka and the obligations resulting from it 843 are connected with natural paternity. Thus, if a woman becomes 837 pregnant as a result of relations with a regular, recognized lover, the latter must assume all responsibility. He is required to "fasten the fetus" and to observe all the regulations pertaining to the

846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that
833 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation; others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut
846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use it and eat food prepared on it.

4) The umbilical cord is dried on the bolíkó (a tray or shelf) and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that purpose, preferably under a bonkomí tree if possible. The ashes and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana tree is called nkíndá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's

[824] 1. This is a generic term used for any banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

●[153] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native
846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.)
614 preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in order to take them back [489] when they return to their village, or send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority in the group. The person involved would meet with the following objection: ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lokokí, óyakúmya ngámo? olé nk'eyâya, "The lokolé was not beaten for you, your

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
946 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad knees. (1)

1. The expression baóngó b'âbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
954 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
749 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's pregnancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit relations until the child is weaned. However she, too, may regain her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The ingredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [824] with the sap of the liféte fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [563] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness 751 is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called [153] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.